



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

# News Release

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## **ICE ARRESTS 17 ILLEGAL WORKERS EMPLOYED BY MILITARY SUBCONTRACTOR THAT ALLEGEDLY IGNORED NO-HIRE WARNINGS**

SAN DIEGO – U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents today executed federal search warrants at two facilities owned by a Southern California military subcontractor that has come under scrutiny twice in the last six years for hiring unauthorized workers.

During the enforcement actions targeting facilities operated by the Golden State Fencing Company in Oceanside and Riverside, ICE agents arrested 17 unauthorized workers, a number of whom are believed to have been re-hired despite warnings to the company not to re-hire due to their illegal immigration status. ICE agents also seized boxes of documents and other information from the company facilities during the searches.

The searches and arrests are part of an ongoing criminal investigation into Golden State's hiring practices. In 1999 and 2004, ICE conducted audits of the firm's hiring records, resulting in warnings to company officials about serious criminal and civil consequences for failing to comply with the orders. Subsequent to the second audit, ICE launched a criminal investigation into the company, which continues today.

In addition to reviewing employment records for Golden State's Oceanside facility, ICE agents also recently audited some 300 employee records for the company's Riverside facility. That review identified more than 100 employees who were unauthorized to work, including three individuals the company had been ordered not to re-hire based on the 1999 audit.

"ICE is using its unique immigration enforcement authorities to safeguard worksites and installations that are potentially vulnerable to security threats or sabotage," said Frank Marwood, acting special agent-in-charge for ICE investigations in San Diego. "That strategy includes using criminal and administrative penalties to deter egregious violators who continue to re-hire unauthorized workers."

Golden State is a Southern California company that has provided contract workers in San Diego to perform services at the U.S. Navy base on North Island. Previous ICE audits showed that some of Golden State's employees had security IDs enabling them to enter North Island to construct fences on the base.

The investigation into Golden State's hiring practices is part of Operation Safe Cities, an ongoing local ICE interior enforcement initiative implemented in 2003 to protect sensitive area businesses from possible security breaches. Since the initiative began, ICE agents here have arrested more than 350 foreign nationals working unlawfully at more than 700 businesses.

Today's arrests are the latest in ICE's ongoing efforts to target and remove illegal aliens working at sensitive sites and critical infrastructure locations around the nation, including defense facilities, nuclear plants, chemical plants, airports, and seaports. Unauthorized workers with access to security sensitive sites and critical infrastructure facilities are vulnerable to exploitation by terrorists, smugglers, traffickers or other criminals. In accordance with ICE's homeland security mission, ICE agents prioritize worksite enforcement efforts by focusing on investigations related to critical infrastructure and national security.

In recent months, ICE agents have conducted a number of worksite enforcement operations at U.S. defense facilities, including the following:

Between October 18 and October 28, 2005, ICE special agents arrested dozens of illegal aliens who were performing contract work at the U.S. Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base-New Orleans in Belle Chasse, Louisiana; the White Sands Missile Range in Las Cruces, New Mexico; the U.S. Army's Fort Irwin Training Center in San Bernardino, California; and the U.S. Marine Corps Logistics Base in Barstow, California.

- At the Naval Air Station, ICE agents screened the identification of more than 450 contractors and sub-contractors working and detained six illegal aliens performing contract work there. The Naval Air Station had previously conducted its own investigation and formally barred more than a dozen workers from the facility.
- At the White Sands Missile Range, ICE agents teamed up with the White Sands Missile Range Police Department to arrest an illegal alien trying to enter to perform contract work inside the facility. Police officials at the facility first sought help from ICE last month after intercepting 12 illegal aliens with fake documents attempting to enter the facility to work at a construction site inside.
- At Fort Irwin, a U.S. Army desert warfare training facility, ICE agents took custody of six illegal aliens attempting to enter Fort Irwin, to perform contract work there. Base security had requested the assistance of ICE after questioning the validity of the documents presented by the illegal aliens as they attempted to enter the base for employment.
- And at the Marine Corps Logistics Base, ICE agents took custody of an illegal alien attempting to enter to perform contract work there. Security officials at the base had intercepted the individual after he allegedly presented a fraudulent driver's license and social security card to officials there.
- On October 5, 2005, ICE arrested three illegal aliens who served as language instructors at the U.S. Army Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Two were criminally charged with using false documents to gain employment and making false statements. The third was charged with being in the country illegally. The employees provided instruction to U.S. Special Forces.

- On October 4, 2005, seven illegal aliens were arrested at the U.S. Air Force Base in Mountain Home, Idaho, following an investigation by ICE and the Air Force Office of Special Investigations. The men were working for Nutek Construction, which was sub-contracted to build housing on the air base.
- On August 26, 2005, ICE agents arrested six Mexican nationals at the U.S. Army's Fort Irwin in Barstow, Calif. The men were working illegally for Laurence-Hovenier, Inc., a construction company building military housing at the base. The workers, most of whom had security badges authorizing them to enter the base, were identified after agents audited the hiring records of more than 700 Laurence-Hovenier workers. The audit found that more than 40 percent of the employees on the company's payroll might not have been authorized to work in the U.S. The investigation continues.
- On July 26, 2005, ICE agents arrested six illegal aliens working at the Homestead Air Reserve Base in Homestead, Fla. The men, who were contracted by a Texas-based corporation, were working on a major runway-resurfacing project. Officers working at the Air Reserve's main gate noticed irregularities in the documents presented by the three men and called ICE for follow-up.

To aid employers with the immigration document screening process, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services operates the Basic Pilot Program, a Web-based system that businesses can use to verify the employment eligibility of newly hired workers. Nationwide, there are thousands of employer sites linked into the Basic Pilot Program, including nearly 2,000 in California. In San Diego, over 100 businesses are now using it. Interested employers are urged to call the agency's toll-free number (888-464-4218) to obtain more information.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*